

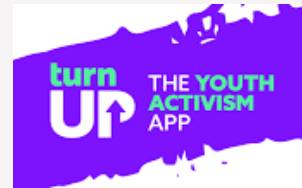
WAYS TO SUPPORT



helping people help the world



ROUNDUP APP
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To join one of our coalitions, visit akwildlife.org/partners

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SPECIAL THANKS

Volunteers and Speakers

Abby Lynch
Abe Miller-Rushing
Amanda Sesser
Andy Yuen
Arin Underwood
Barb Lake
Benjamin Meyer
Bill Templin
Bob Armstrong
Bonnie Easley-Appleyard
Brian Zwiebel
Caroline Cummings
Chuck Caldwell
Cindy Tribuzio
Colin Tyler
Cory Arlian
Cory Lescher

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Dan Ruthrauff
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Diane Granfors
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Emma Luck
Erin Knoll
Galen Hetch
Grant Margeson
Heidi Pearson
Jake Egelhoff
Jane Belovarac
Jeremy Littell
Jill Johnstone
Jim Lawler
Joel Bennett
Joel Reynolds

Joseph Geldhof
Julia Illar
Juliette Boselli
Kimberlee Beckmen
Laurie Craig
Leslie Field
Liliana Naves
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Marc Webber
Matt Bowser
Matthew Kirchhoff
Meda DeWitt
Melissa Dowell
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Todd Eskelin
Tom Counts
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Will Putman

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ALASKA WILDLIFE ALLIANCE



2022 | ANNUAL REPORT

GIVING A VOICE TO WILDLIFE



Alaska is America's last great wilderness, home to a unique and spectacular array of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species. The Alaska Wildlife Alliance (AWA) advocates for the protection and restoration of healthy ecosystems across Alaska, ensuring that they are scientifically and ethically managed for biodiversity.

MEET AWA

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From left to right:
 Tommy Johnson
 Linda Shaw
 Irene Morris
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LISA FERGUSON VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



We are proud to recognize Joseph Geldhof and Joel Bennett as AWA's 2022 *Lisa Ferguson Volunteers of the Year Award* recipients! We are honored to have Joel as a co-plaintiff in the lawsuit to protect Alexander Archipelago wolves. In addition to having served on the Alaska Board of Game for 13 years across multiple Governors, Joel is one of the most premier wildlife filmmakers in the world. His films, including *Admiralty Island Fortress of the Bear* and *Tougher in Alaska*, have captured the magic of Alaska's wildlife and shared it with generations around the globe. Joseph (Joe) has offered pro-bono legal representation on the case. Joe is known across Alaska for tackling tough Constitutional cases and legislative issues - and winning! The Alexander Archipelago wolves we seek to protect are in good paws with Joe speaking for them in court. Together, Joe and Joel have logged hundreds of hours to write the complaint, gather evidence, prepare for and endure a week-long trial, and submit an appeal to Alaska's Supreme Court. Thank you, Joe and Joel, for supporting AWA and providing a critical voice to the Alexander Archipelago wolves!

Joe and Joel outside the Juneau courthouse in April

AWA's Lisa Ferguson Volunteer award is presented in remembrance of Lisa Ferguson, who died of Hodgkin's disease when she was 18 years old. Lisa's legacy lives on through her family's support of wildlife conservation and the volunteers who make that work possible.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS WORK POSSIBLE



Individual memberships are critical to our success, and account for one-third of our annual income. Our members also increase our influence - the bigger our pack, the more influential we are. **THANK YOU** for sharing your income with wildlife!

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 - Wendy Greenberg
 - Will Saltonstall
 - William Byl
 - William Tompkins
 - William Watkins
 - Wilson Rice
 - Wolf Conservation Center
 - Zachary Naramore

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023



In partnership with the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the University of South Florida, AWA is excited to launch a project to understand how effectively beavers recharge climate-drying peatlands on the Kenai Peninsula.



Ben Olson will continue his project to document Alexander Archipelago Wolves on Prince of Wales Island. Through photography and videography, we aim to tell the complex story of these remaining genetically-distinct wolves. Thank you to the donors who have made this project possible! For more information, visit www.akwildlife.org/pow-wolves.



In partnership with the Native Village of Paimiut and Environmental Consortium in the Asqinaq (Hooper Bay region as it is also known) we will develop a Climate Vulnerability Assessment for humans and wildlife, identifying place-based, nature-based solutions to climate change.



Catch us at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium, where AWA and our partners will present our maps of cumulative threats to Cook Inlet belugas as well as updates about the status of their prey. These projects are made possible through collaborations with Defenders of Wildlife, Cook Inletkeeper, Trustees for Alaska, Environmental Investigation Agency, and Dr. William Bechtol.



After five long years, Ramey Newell's documentary *A Good Wolf* will be ready for the big screen by the end of 2023! Special thanks to all the individuals who have donated to the film, as well as the Patagonia Foundation for their support. Watch the trailer and learn more at www.akwildlife.org/film-fund.



Catch us at the Alaska Board of Game meetings in January and March! We have eleven proposals before the Board of Game this year and would love your support. Email nicole@akwildlife.org if you would like to volunteer or testify on behalf of wildlife.

DEFENDING WILDLIFE IN THE COURTS



Alaska Wildlife Alliance, et al., v. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

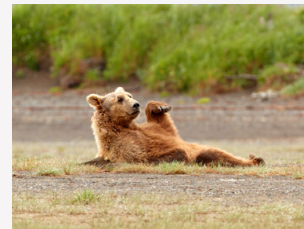
Last year, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) passed a rule to increase the amount of legal harassment allowable to oil and gas operators on polar bears and walrus in the Beaufort Sea and on the North Slope. The new rule allows oil and gas companies to harass almost half of the polar bears left in the Southern Beaufort Sea population (less than 900 individuals left), double what USFWS previously allowed. These bears have already declined by 40% in the past few decades and continue to face habitat loss. Our lawsuit charges the USFWS with violating the National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act. *Special thanks to Trustees for Alaska and our coalition partners.*



Alaska Wildlife Alliance and Joel Bennett v. Vincent-Lang | Represented by Joe Geldhof

In October of 2020, we sued the State of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to prevent unsustainable wolf trapping seasons on Prince of Wales Island. In one season, trappers killed over 40% of the island's genetically distinct Alexander Archipelago wolves. We seek balanced management that ensures a healthy, sustainable wolf population on the island. After an intensive week-long trial this Spring, we found the Court's decision deserves further review, and filed an appeal with the Alaska Supreme Court. The appeal will be heard in 2023. *Special thanks to Joe Geldhof, Joel Bennett, Matthew Kirchhoff, Natalie Dawson, Dave Persons, Grant Margeson, Tom Counts, and Carol Damberg for their expertise and support!*

Photo by Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game



Alaska Wildlife Alliance, et al., v. Haaland, et al. | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

In August 2020, we sued the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service (NPS) for adopting a rule that would allow extreme sport hunting practices, such as bear baiting and killing wolves and their pups during the denning season in Alaska's park lands. These extreme and unethical practices are now allowed by NPS on iconic public lands such as Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias. *Special thanks to Bill Watkins, Trustees for Alaska, and our coalition partners.*



Gwich'in Steering Committee v. Haaland | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

We are part of the coalition taking the Department of Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to court for their plan to open the Coastal Plains of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil companies. Stopping these lease sales is essential to protecting Arctic wildlife already stressed by climate change. *Special thanks to Ronald Yarnell, Trustees for Alaska, and our coalition partners.*



Northern Alaska Environmental Center v. Bernhardt | Represented by Trustees for Alaska & Western Mining Action Project

We serve on the coalition challenging the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for approving the Ambler Road. The road would cut through Gates of the Arctic National Preserve, fragment one of the longest caribou migrations in the world, cross nearly 3,000 rivers and streams, dam tundra wetlands, and stir up asbestos that pollutes air and water- all to access new open-pit hard rock mining. *Special thanks to Juliette Boselli, Anne Beaulaurier, Seth Kantner, Trustees for Alaska, and our coalition partners.*



Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority v. Biden | Represented by Trustees for Alaska

In March, we and 12 coalition partners led by the Gwich'in Steering Committee, intervened in a lawsuit brought by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) and the State of Alaska against the Biden administration. In this case, the AIDEA and the state of Alaska asked the court to force the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to allow oil and gas activities in the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge — despite serious legal problems with the leasing program adopted by the Trump administration. We seek to defend the Interior Department's suspension of oil and gas activities in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. *Special thanks to coalition partners and Trustees for Alaska.*

Learn more about AWA's work to represent wildlife in the courts at www.akwildlife.org/lawsuits

CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE

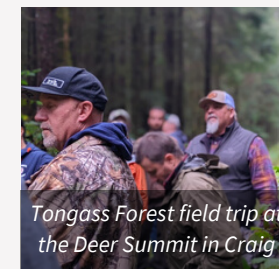


At more than 30 events in 2022, we educated *thousands* of people about Alaska's wildlife and ecosystems!

- **Bears, Birds, & Beers:** Over 75 wildlife enthusiasts joined us for free guided wildlife walks, followed by beers at a local Anchorage brewery this summer!
- **Wildlife Wednesday Presentations:** We hosted 19 *Wildlife Wednesdays* where over 2,000 people learned about Alaska's wildlife, from beavers to shorebirds, humpback whales, hummingbirds, sharks, caribou and more. Thank you to all our volunteer speakers and business sponsors! You can view *Wildlife Wednesday* recordings on our website, YouTube channel, and Facebook page.
- **Beluga Whale Education:** We gave educational presentations and site tours about belugas to students traveling with Global Leadership Adventures. After a 2-year pause, NOAA Fisheries, AWA and our partners also resumed the annual Belugas Count! event across Cook Inlet, where AWA co-hosted the Kenai monitoring site.
- **Denali Wolf Documentary:** Filming for the documentary, *A Good Wolf* (working title) resumed this August. This documentary, which will be ready by end of 2023, portrays the controversy over hunting and trapping of wolves at the boundary of Denali National Park. Learn more and view the trailer at akwildlife.org/film-fund!
- **Alexander Archipelago Wolves:** AWA was excited to participate in the Craig Deer Summit, a gathering of community members, scientists, and hunters to share information and discuss factors that influence the deer population on Prince of Wales Island, including wolves. We also partnered with photographer Ben Olson to document these rare wolves and their changing habitat.



Mandy Migura monitors belugas on the Kenai River



Tongass Forest field trip at the Deer Summit in Craig



Next Gen AWA volunteers at Wild Salmon Day



Belugas Count! Kenai station volunteers

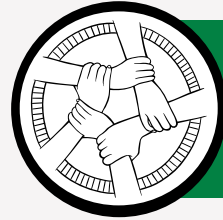


Carol Damberg collects cameras for the Alexander Archipelago wolf media project

RESEARCHING VULNERABLE SPECIES & HABITATS

- **We're published!** This year, AWA's Vice President Dr. John Morton, Executive Director Nicole Schmitt, and Deputy Director Mandy Migura were contributing authors to seven different articles published across multiple journals, including:
 - *A RADical approach to conservation in Alaska* in *The Wildlife Professional*
 - *Responding to Ecosystem Transformation: Resist, Accept, or Direct?* in *Fisheries*
 - *Congenital defects and herpesvirus infection in beluga whale *Delphinapterus leucas* calves from the Critically Endangered Cook Inlet population* in *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms*
 - *Management Foundations for Navigating Ecological Transformation by Resisting, Accepting, or Directing Social-Ecological Change* in *Bioscience*
- In partnership with conservation partners, AWA is creating a map that consolidates and visualizes habitat threats and stressors to Cook Inlet belugas whales, including legal harassment permits, shipping routes, oil and gas mixing zones, and wastewater treatment facility mixing zones. This map will be presented at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January, 2023 and available online.
- In partnership with the Environmental Investigation Agency, we contracted a fisheries biologist to gather data on Cook Inlet beluga prey availability and update the Cook Inlet Beluga Prey supplement from the 2016 Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Recovery Plan. Much of these data have not been updated since 2010, but they are necessary to understand what types and how much food is currently available to Cook Inlet belugas. This report will be presented at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January, 2023 and available online.
- We continued to be a partner of the Alaska Beluga Monitoring Partnership and the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team, training volunteers to monitor beluga whales in Cook Inlet and track seabird die-offs around the state.

2022 IN NUMBERS



From the tourism industry to hunters, small businesses, scientists, educators, and other conservation nonprofits, we are building coalitions that support wildlife across the state. In 2022, we partnered with over **30** organizations to support wildlife.



13 PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

We submitted 13 proposals to the Board of Game, 11 of which will be heard at the 2023 meetings. Ten of our proposals seek to remedy faults in the Prince of Wales wolf trapping regulations, which do not have in-season mechanisms for preventing over-trapping. We also wrote Proposal 145, which seeks 1/4 mile hunting and trapping setbacks from the soon-to-be-constructed Sterling Highway wildlife underpasses and overpass (the first in Alaska!) near Cooper Landing. Join our newsletter to learn how you can support these proposals!



250+ MARINE MAMMAL ENTHUSIASTS

In partnership with the Homer Foundation, University of Alaska - Kachemak Bay Campus, and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, our four-day Kachemak Bay Marine Mammal Forum was a success! Over 250 people attended virtually and in person to learn about local marine wildlife and ways they can get involved in marine stewardship. Missed the event? We can't re-create the marine mammal bar trivia experience, but you can watch all the presentations on our website and Youtube channel! www.youtube.com/alaskawildlifealliance



FORTY UNDER 40

This year, AWA's Executive Director Nicole Schmitt was recognized as an outstanding young professional in the 2022 Alaska Top Forty Under 40 by the Alaska Journal of Commerce and Anchorage Daily News. This year, the selection committee considered 288 nominees, the largest number of submissions in the state's Top Forty Under 40 honors. We are honored by the recognition and for the nomination from AWA staff, the Alaska Beluga Monitoring Partnership, and the Chugach Regional Resources Commission.



500+ HOURS OF ENDANGERED BELUGA MONITORING

In partnership with Kenai Peninsula Collage, AWA hosts Alaska Beluga Monitoring Partnership sites on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. Between August of 2021-2022, our staff and AKBMP volunteers monitored critically endangered beluga whales in rain and shine:

Kenai River: **370+ hours over 170+ days, 70 observers**

Kasilof River: **135+ hours over 65 days, 15 observers**

450+ subscribers to our Kenai-area beluga sightings text alert system (doubled since 2021!). Text "beluga" to 833-541-0408 to join!



25 IDEAS FOR INNOVATIVE CLIMATE ADAPTATION

With the support of a diverse Steering Committee from the Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center, USGS, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and the State of Alaska, we hosted our first *Approaches to Adapting to Alaska's Rapidly Warming Climate* workshop! Over three days, as many as 264 participants engaged in discussions and listened to 23 speakers deliver 25 presentations on thought-provoking questions and cutting-edge solutions to the climate challenge in Alaska. You can watch recordings of the workshop and read the workshop report at www.akwildlife.org/workshop.



31 EVENTS WITH 3,500+ PERSON PARTICIPATION

We are grateful to the volunteers who made this year's in-person and virtual education and advocacy events possible! We enjoyed meeting folks from around the world who are interested in supporting wildlife at our *Wildlife Wednesdays* and *Bears, Birds and Beers* events, as well as community gathering such as SalmonFest, Wild Salmon Day, Kenai River Festival and many more. Check out AWA's upcoming events on our website and Facebook page!

SPEAKING UP FOR WILDLIFE

KENAI REFUGE VICTORY!



In April we celebrated the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision that upheld a 2016 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service rule which prohibits brown bear baiting in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, and continues management of the Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area for wildlife viewing and education. AWA and coalition partners intervened in defense of this rule in 2017, when it was challenged by Safari Club International and the State. The Refuge is obligated to protect Kenai brown bears on Refuge lands, and the Court's decision recognizes the agency's authority to do so. At a time when so many of Alaska's wildlife protections are being rolled back, this ruling comes as a sigh of relief for all those who enjoy the Refuge and its wildlife. We are forever grateful to our co-plaintiffs and the legal team at Trustees for Alaska for representing us in this case!

PROTECTING TRAILS



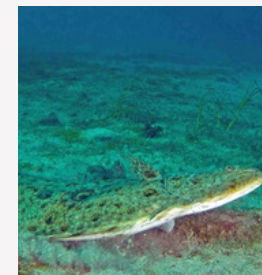
In 2021, AWA received multiple reports of traps on multiuse trails, to include: one dog killed and another injured by conibear traps placed less than 100 feet from trailheads; a motocross rider pulled off his motorbike by a snare; and multiple dogs caught in snares at popular Mat Su-area trails. In response, we published our first *Map the Trap* report with consolidated data on trap encounters across Alaska. We also drafted a proposal to the Board of Game (BOG), which requested 50 yard trap setbacks from over 200 designated and maintained multiuse trails in the Mat Su-area. We mobilized nearly 500 comments and testimonies before the BOG in support of this proposal, with only 36 comments against. But, the Board did not accept the proposal and asked us to negotiate with trappers for a reduced list of trails. In February, we negotiated (by trapper and non-trapper consensus) the original list of 200+ trails to a mere 18 trails. At the March BOG meeting, the Board denied both our original proposal and the negotiated 18 trail proposal without explanation, despite broad public support for trap setbacks. The Board's extreme position was covered by Alaska Public Media, Anchorage Daily News, Anchorage Press, and the Alaska Landmine. We will continue to collect data on trap encounters in multiuse areas through our Map the Trap program, and seek resolution where we can. This fall, AWA submitted an Amicus Brief before Alaska's Supreme Court in support of the City of Valdez's trap setbacks from local multiuse trails. We also support the Cooper Landing Safe Trails proposals and the Homer Advisory Committee proposal for setbacks near multiuse trails in Cooper Landing and Homer. If you would like to get involved, visit www.akwildlife.org/safetrails, email nicole@akwildlife.org, or text "trap" to 833-541-0408 to join our free text alert system.

REDUCING HARRASSMENT OF CRITICALLY ENDANGERED BELUGA WHALES



In 2021, AWA's Deputy Director Mandy Migura co-authored "*To take or not take? Examination of the status quo process for issuing take authorizations of endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales and implications for their recovery*" published in Conservation Science and Practice. The study highlighted NOAA Fisheries' liberal approach to authorizing harassment (also known as "take") of critically endangered Cook Inlet beluga whales; in some years, the amount of legally authorized harassment was more than 8,000% of the beluga population size. In response, we and coalition partners filed a legal petition in January requesting NOAA re-examine their existing system of authorizing harassment of these endangered whales. In the petition, we requested that NOAA Fisheries: conduct comprehensive reviews of their take authorization/permitting systems; set an annual "cap" on the amount of harassment authorized for Cook Inlet belugas; and create an online, publicly-accessible system that tracks the amount of take applied for, the amount of take legally authorized, and all take that actually occurred (whether authorized or not). The result of this petition will be available in 2023.

VICTORY! REDUCING HALIBUT BYCATCH



Thanks to the support and testimony of hundreds of Alaskans, including many AWA members, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council voted to reduce trawl halibut bycatch in the Bering Sea. Under the new guidelines, when halibut abundance is very low, legal bycatch levels drop by 35 percent. Leading up to the vote, AWA joined numerous Alaska Native groups, a bipartisan coalition of Alaska legislators, and fishermen's associations across the state to support halibut bycatch reduction. Never before have Alaskans from all regions and sectors come together in this way to support unified action to protect our fisheries and communities. We are honored to have stood with numerous Alaskan communities, Tribes, and fishers in support of reduced bycatch, and will continue to advocate for intact marine habitats across Alaska.